

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6672

As of February 12, 2002

Title: An act relating to effects of inorganic fluoride on the quality of the waters of the state.

Brief Description: Requiring a study of the effects of inorganic fluoride on the quality of the waters of the state.

Sponsors: Senators McCaslin, Swecker and Fraser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Environment, Energy & Water: 2/5/02.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & WATER

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

Background: The fluoridation of drinking water is a local decision. Local water districts may have the question of fluoridation submitted to the local electors for a vote. The addition of fluoride to a public water system and the discharge of that water can result in fluoride entering the waters of the state. This discharge has raised concerns about the degradation of the state's water quality and about its effect on salmonid populations and other aquatic species.

The government of British Columbia, Canada, has recently established ambient water quality criteria for fluoride in order to protect habitat for freshwater and marine aquatic life. It is suggested an assessment of the state's waters should be conducted for the purpose of determining whether associated water quality standards should be adopted.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Ecology must conduct a study of the effects of inorganic fluoride on the quality of the waters of the state. The study must include: a scientific literature review; an assessment of the inorganic fluoride levels in the marine and freshwater; the best available science in determining the threshold effects of inorganic fluoride on aquatic life; and the consideration of factors such as low-level stream flows, variations in water temperature, and the hardness of the waters.

The draft findings and recommendations are available for review and comment at public hearings. A 90-day written public comment period is provided.

The department must prepare a final report containing its comprehensive findings and recommendations based upon its assessment. The final report is due to the Governor, the Salmon Recovery Office, and the Legislature by December 15, 2003.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 28, 2002.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.